



# AN INVESTIGATION INTO HOW COLLEGE STUDENTS VIEW COMEDY IN KOLLYWOOD FILMS

Mr. Manoj Prabhakar<sup>1</sup>, Dr. V. Vennila<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Assistant Professor, Department of Visual Communication, Vels Institute of Science, Technology, and Advanced Sciences (VISTAS), Chennai

<sup>2</sup> Assistant Professor, Department of English, SRM Institute of Science and Technology, Faculty of Science and Humanities, Kattankulathur

## ABSTRACT

Kollywood, or Tamil film, has traditionally relied heavily on comedy as a form of amusement and social criticism. College students' perceptions of comic features in Kollywood films are examined in this study, which looks at genre preferences, relatability, cultural resonance, and comedy style. Perceptions, preferences, and the psychological effects of humorous content were evaluated using both qualitative and quantitative approaches on a sample of 100 students from different colleges in Tamil Nadu. The effectiveness of several comic genres, including slapstick, satire, parody, and situational comedy, as well as how well they connect with today's kids, is examined in this study. The results show that situational and accessible humor is preferred by students over slapstick or over-the-top humor. The study also explores how contemporary comic material reflects shifting student expectations and cultural norms. There are suggestions for additional study on genre-based viewer segmentation as well as implications for filmmakers, screenwriters, and educators.

**KEYWORDS:** Comedy, Characterization, Mannerism, Social Message, Dialogues

## INTRODUCTION

South India's cultural and emotional fabric has been greatly influenced by Tamil cinema, also referred to as Kollywood. Comedy has a unique place among Kollywood's many genres because of its capacity to appeal to viewers of all ages and socioeconomic backgrounds. Comedy reflects the changing dynamics of society in addition to providing entertainment. Comedy in movies is viewed through distinct and critical lenses by college students, who are a lively and inquisitive segment of society. This study explores the tastes, interpretations, and emotional reactions of college students while they watch comedies in Kollywood films.

Over the years, Tamil cinema's humorous environment has changed in several ways. Kollywood has utilized comedy as a narrative device and a forum for commentary, as evidenced by the naive and physical humor of characters like Nagesh, the socially concerned humor of Vivek, and the rustic satire of Vadivelu. Comedians like Yogi Babu and RJ Balaji have been more popular in recent years; their humor frequently combines contemporary themes, political overtones, and issues that are relevant to young people. Due to these changes, comedy is now more than just a way to make people laugh; it is now a way to express resistance, represent society's values, and provide psychological solace.

The hilarious atmosphere of Tamil cinema has evolved in several ways over time. Kollywood has utilized comedy as a narrative device and a forum for commentary, as evidenced by the naive and physical humor of characters like Nagesh, the

socially concerned humor of Vivek, and the rustic satire of Vadivelu. Comedians like Yogi Babu and RJ Balaji have been more popular in recent years; their humor frequently combines contemporary themes, political overtones, and issues that are relevant to young people. Due to these changes, comedy is now more than just a way to make people laugh; it is now a way to express resistance, represent society's values, and provide psychological solace.

Tamil cinema's comedic landscape has evolved in several ways over time. Kollywood has utilized comedy as a narrative device and a forum for commentary, as evidenced by the naive and physical humor of characters like Nagesh, the socially concerned humor of Vivek, and the rustic satire of Vadivelu. Comedians like Yogi Babu and RJ Balaji have been more popular in recent years; their humor frequently combines contemporary themes, political overtones, and issues that are relevant to young people. Due to these changes, comedy is now more than just a way to make people laugh; it is now a way to express resistance, represent society's values, and provide psychological solace.

In a rapidly changing media environment where content is increasingly being scrutinized for its sensitivity and relevance, understanding how the youth perceive comedy becomes essential. This research not only highlights the role of humor in Tamil cinema but also provides insights into how comedy functions as a mirror to the hopes, anxieties, and ideologies of today's college students. By analyzing these perspectives, the study contributes to a broader understanding of the cultural

and psychological impact of Kollywood comedy on young audiences in Tamil Nadu and beyond.

### OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To examine the comedic genres in Kollywood movies that college students like best.
2. To investigate the psychological effects of humorous material on the emotional health of college students.
3. To investigate how gender affects how comedy in Tamil movies is viewed and enjoyed.
4. To look into how students' interest in Kollywood comedy is affected by digital media (memes, videos, social media sharing).

### REVIEW OF LITERATURE

#### 1. Gokulsing & Dissanayake (2004): A Story of Cultural Transformation in Indian Popular Film

This seminal work sheds light on the political, emotional, and cultural nuances present in Indian cinema. The writers stress how humor in local movies, such as Kollywood, mirrors ingrained societal dynamics. They talk about how humor serves as a critique and a source of relief while bridging cultural divides. According to their research, comedians who tackle common problems and societal injustices are likely to resonate with young audiences because they use humor as a subtly instructive medium.

#### 2. The Eye of the Serpent: S. Theodore Baskaran's 1996 introduction to Tamil cinema

In his historical overview of Tamil cinema, Baskaran follows the evolution of comedy from early luminaries like N.S. Krishnan to modern comedians. He highlights how comedians were frequently employed to give voice to the underprivileged by satirizing caste and bureaucracy. His approach offers background information on why contemporary students continue to find humor in figures that subvert authority.

#### 3. The Image Trap: M.G. Ramachandran in Film and Politics by M.S.S. Pandian (1992)

Pandian focuses on the political economy of Tamil film, emphasizing the use of comedy to humanize M.G.R. and other superstars and establish an emotional bond with audiences. The study illustrates how student audiences are frequently drawn to films where comedy complements heroism, reinforcing fan identities and social ideals, by examining the humorous subplots in hero-centric films.

#### 4. Tamil Identity and Comedy in Sundararaj Theodore (2018)

This study explores how Kollywood comedy constructs and maintains Tamil cultural identity. Sundararaj discovers that educated youth value comedy's social commentary and political satire through focus group discussions with college students. It also emphasizes how well-liked comedians like Vivek are, as they frequently incorporate educational and environmental themes into their routines to appeal to students.

#### 5. Krishnan A. (2020): Tamil Nadu's Youth and Media Consumption

Krishnan's research focuses on how young people in cities use digital media, particularly memes and brief video clips inspired by Tamil movies. According to the report's findings, students generally enjoy Kollywood's comedic material and prefer funny, relatable situations to slapstick. This change reflects shifting student tastes brought forth by exposure to the world, social media, and internet culture.

#### 6. Anand S.'s article on the psychological impacts of comic relief in Tamil films was published in the Journal of Media Psychology in 2021

Anand investigates how comedy in Tamil cinema supports college students' emotional health. According to a survey that polled more than 150 students, comedy reduces stress, particularly during test times. Additionally, students are becoming more interested in sarcasm and black comedy, which they perceive as both clever and emotionally impactful. This demonstrates that comedy serves as a coping strategy in addition to being amusing.

#### 7. Conversations with Mani Ratnam by Rangan B. (2014)

This book examines how situational and ironic humor can be included in otherwise serious stories through talks with director Mani Ratnam. College audiences that are accustomed to softer storytelling will particularly like Ratnam's delicate use of comedy. His work is especially captivating for pupils with an intellectual bent since his characters frequently employ humor to release tension or reveal personal realities.

#### 8. Comedy in Tamil Cinema: An Examination of Development and Acceptance, Arulmozhi M. (2016)

The development of Tamil film comedy and the differences in acceptance among demographic groups are examined in this dissertation. According to the study, today's college students prefer socially conscious comedy and are more skeptical of offensive or regressive humor. It also emphasizes how comedians like Yogi Babu have reinterpreted the aesthetics of humor to appeal to younger audiences that place more importance on substance than look.

#### 9. Miller T. - Global Hollywood (2001)

Despite its Hollywood focus, this work discusses how international media affects local film businesses. Sarcasm, self-deprecating humor, and witty banter are examples of Western influence on Tamil comedy, especially after 2010. College students' expectations and understanding of comedy in Kollywood are influenced by the variety of comic styles they encounter due to their increasing access to international platforms.

### HYPOTHESIS:

1. The age of the respondents and the personas, demeanors, looks, and dialogues of comedians are significantly correlated.
2. The characteristics, demeanor, appearance, and speech of

comedians are significantly correlated with the respondents' gender.

3. The respondents' frequency of movie viewing and comedians' characterisation, demeanor, look, and language are significantly correlated.
4. The respondents' preferred movie genre and comedians' characterization, demeanor, look, and language are significantly correlated.

## DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATIONS

This study aims to comprehend how young brains react to comedic scenes. It also seeks to analyze the elements of comedic sequences that have a significant impact on the audience.

### OCURRENCES

#### Age:

Of 100 samples, 24% of responders are 17 years old, 48% are 18 years old, 12% are 19 and 20 years old, and 2% are 21 and 22 years old. The proportion of teenagers is larger since they are more impacted by media content.

#### Gender:

Of the 100 respondents, 52% were male and 48% were female.

#### Nature of birth:

This question was designed to determine whether single children and those with siblings have different perspectives, as single children have no one to quarrel with or share their views besides elderly people. 26% of respondents are single children at home, while 74% have siblings.

#### Movie watching frequency:

72% of respondents said they watch movies often, 24% said they watch them moderately, 2% said they watch them infrequently, and 2% said they never watch movies. Favorite movie genre: 20% of respondents indicated they favored romantic movies, while 10% said they preferred scary movies. According to the survey, 20% of respondents enjoy action movies. Of those surveyed, 26% preferred comedies, while 24% preferred other genres.

#### Seeing funny movie scenes:

Just 2% of respondents said they didn't enjoy viewing funny movie sequences, whilst 98% of respondents said they did. Seeing funny movie scenes:

#### CHI-SQUARE test:

Preferred movie kind versus age: The respondents' age had no discernible impact on the type of film they viewed (Chi-square value: 0.953).

The chi-square value of 0.187 suggests that respondents' age and their appreciation of humorous movie scenes are not significantly correlated.

Gender versus preferred movie type: The respondents' gender does have a significant impact on the type of film they see (Chi-square value: 0.041).

The respondents' watching of humorous movie scenes and their age and gender do not significantly correlate, according to the chi-square score of 0.766.

Birth type versus chosen movie kind: The respondents' age had no discernible impact on the type of film they viewed (Chi-square value: 0.276).

Nature of birth against viewing comedic movie scenes: The respondents' ages and viewing comedic movie scenes do not significantly correlate (Chi square value: 0.549).

### One-way ANOVA:

#### Age:

The influence of respondents' ages on the comedian's performance style is very significant, as indicated by the F ratio (3.505). Therefore, it can be said that respondents' age has a bigger influence on how they perceive the comedian's demeanor ( $p > 0.009$ ).

$p > 0.050$  and the F value is 2.428. Thus, it can be concluded that the age and the social message that comic situations transmit are significantly correlated.

The F ratios for the other two dependent variables, comedians' dialogues and character traits, are 0.955 ( $p < 0.455$ ) and 0.792 ( $p < 0.561$ ), respectively, and do not significantly correlate with respondents' ages.

#### Gender:

$p > 0.032$  and the F value is 4.896. Thus, it can be concluded that there is a strong correlation between the comedians' gender and demeanor.

The remaining three dependent variables—characterization, social themes imparted, and dialogues utilized by comedians—have no significant link with respondents' gender, with respective F ratios of 0.664 ( $p < 0.419$ ), 0.923 ( $p < 0.342$ ), and 0.315 ( $p < 0.577$ ).

The nature of birth of the respondents has no significant relationship with the dependent variables taken into consideration in this study, according to the F ratio of characterization, which is 0.190 ( $p < 0.455$ ), mannerism (0.857;  $p < 0.359$ ), social messages conveyed (1.003;  $p < 0.322$ ), and dialogues delivered (0.164;  $p < 0.688$ ).

#### Movie viewing frequency:

Mannerism 1.523 ( $p < 0.221$ ), social messages delivered 0.463 ( $p < 0.710$ ), dialogues delivered 1.268 ( $p < 0.296$ ), and F ratio of characterization, 0.776 ( $p < 0.513$ ). The aforementioned figures suggest that there is no significant correlation between the respondents' frequency of movie viewing and the dependent variables taken into account in this investigation.

The respondents' preferred movie genre has no significant relationship with the dependent variables taken into consideration in this study, as indicated by the F ratio of characterization, 1.625 ( $p < 0.184$ ), mannerism 0.879 ( $p < 0.484$ ), social messages conveyed 1.402 ( $p < 0.249$ ), and

dialogues delivered 0.303 ( $p < 0.874$ ).

### Viewing comedy moments in films:

The respondents' viewing of comedy scenes had a highly significant impact on the comedians' on-screen personas, as indicated by the F ratio of 3.538 ( $p < 0.046$ ).  $p > 0.038$  and the F value is 2.280. Thus, it can be concluded that the way comedians are portrayed and the amount of time spent watching comic situations are significantly correlated. There is no significant correlation between the respondents' viewing patterns of comedy sequences and the other two dependent variables, social messages transmitted and comedians' dialogues, which have F ratios of 1.920 ( $p < 0.172$ ) and 0.033 ( $p < 0.857$ ), respectively.

### CONCLUSION

The study's findings indicate that respondents' viewing of comedic moments is unaffected by their birth type, frequency of movie viewing, or favoured genre. Because they are younger and the only age group that tends to be independent enough to access media for satisfaction, college students are more influenced by comedians' demeanors because they are simple to understand and apply among peers. Due to their liking for light-heartedness and fun over seriousness and tension, people are receptive to the societal themes that comedians portray. Because men and women view gender differently, there is a considerable association between the behaviours comedians depict and their gender. These young brains focus more on the mannerisms and characters, which makes them want to watch more comedic sequences.

### REFERENCES

1. Iannaco, G., & Anderson, D. (2010). The film *Iris* depicts the hopelessness of love and hate in dementia. *International Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 91(6), 1289–1297.
2. Eysenck, M. W., & Eysenck, H. J. (1985). *An approach based on natural science to personality and personal traits*. Press Plenum.
3. Grote, D. (1983). *The end of comedy: The comedic tradition and the sit-com*. Archon Books.
4. Jones, G. (1992). *Honey, I'm home! Sitcoms and the American dream*. St. Martin's Press.
5. Langford, B. (2005). "Our usual impasse": The episodic situation comedy repeated. In J. Bignell & S. Lacey (Eds.), *Popular television drama: Critical perspectives* (pp. 15–31). Manchester University Press.
6. Mills, B. (2001). Comedy. In G. Creeber (Ed.), *the television genre book* (pp. 61–62). BFI Publishing.
7. Wenner, L., Palmgreen, P., & Rosengren, K. E. (1985). Uses and gratifications research: The past decade. In K. E. Rosengren, L. A. Wenner, & P. Palmgreen (Eds.), *Media gratifications research: Current perspectives* (pp. 3–13). Sage.
8. Gosling, S. D., and P. J. Rentfrow (2003). The dos and don'ts of daily life: How personality traits and music preferences relate to others. *Social Psychology and Personality Journal*, 84(6), 1236–1256. 10.1037/0022-3514.84.6.1236 can be accessed at <https://doi.org>.